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WEATHER & CROP NEWS

Week ending January 9, 2004

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WEATHER SUMMARY: Most parts of the Panhandle received around a half inch to one and a half inches of rain during the week of January 2 through 8. Elsewhere, conditions were mostly dry with no rainfall or only traces of rain falling. The threat of wildfire is high in some southeastern Peninsula, Big Bend and northeastern Peninsula localities. Balmy temperatures boosted crop growth with temperatures averaging five to 13 degrees above normal in the major cities. Daytime highs were in the 70s and 80s while nighttime lows were mostly in the 50s and 60s. Some areas of the northern and central Peninsula and the Panhandle recorded at least one low in the 40s.

FIELD CROPS: Sugarcane harvesting is active in the Everglades region. The lack of recent rainfall is lowering soil moisture supplies in most areas across the State. Topsoil and subsoil moisture is rated short to adequate in most areas of the Panhandle and northern Peninsula with Union County reporting adequate to surplus supplies. Central and southern Peninsula localities reported short to mostly adequate moisture supplies with Indian River reporting surplus supplies and Okeechobee County reporting mostly adequate to surplus soil moisture. In Hernando County, soil moisture supplies range from very short to surplus. Scattered pockets of very short soil moisture exist in some areas along the southeastern coast.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	<i>Percent</i>					
Very short	1	1	3	0	1	2
Short	46	34	34	18	29	29
Adequate	47	55	62	71	65	68
Surplus	6	10	1	11	5	1

VEGETABLES: Mostly clear, warm weather promoted plant growth and development, and let growers keep planting and harvesting on schedule. Vegetables and non citrus fruit available include snap beans, cabbage, celery, sweet corn, cucumbers, eggplant, endive, escarole, lettuce, peppers, radishes, strawberries, squash, and tomatoes.

LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES: In the Panhandle, pasture condition is mostly good. Small grain winter forage is in good condition. In the north, most pasture is in fair condition. Unseasonably warm and dry conditions hurt small grain winter forage, which is not doing as well as it could. The Bahia grass is already starting to green up. In the central and southwest, pasture is poor to fair due to drought and earlier cold temperatures. Statewide, the condition of the cattle is poor to fair with most cattle in fair condition.

Condition	Range		Cattle	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
	<i>Percent</i>			
Very poor	0	0	0	0
Poor	25	40	10	10
Fair	60	50	60	65
Good	15	10	30	20
Excellent	0	0	0	5

CITRUS: This past week, temperatures in citrus producing areas have run between 5 to 10 degrees above average with the highest temperature recorded in Sebring at 85 degrees. Rainfall has been limited to less than one tenth of an inch in all monitored areas. Very little rainfall the past couple of weeks and warm temperatures have been continual throughout the citrus belt. This sort of weather, with enough soil moisture, could promote an early bloom. Should this happen, trees could be susceptible to a cold snap later in the month. Caretaking practices include limited mowing, hedging and topping. Late oranges are beginning to color in all areas with early and mid oranges being picked for mostly processing. Fresh fruit packing houses are still running early oranges (Navels and Hamlins), white and colored grapefruit, Sunburst tangerines, decreasing amounts of Tangelos, small amounts of Temples, and increasing quantities of Honey tangerines.

ESTIMATED BOXES HARVESTED WEEK ENDED			
Crop	Dec 26	Jan 2	Jan 9
<i>In thousands of 1-3/5 bushel boxes</i>			
Early & Mid oranges	NA	4,221	NA
Navel oranges	NA	41	NA
Grapefruit	NA	346	NA
Tangelos	NA	80	NA
Sunburst tangerines	NA	111	NA
Honey tangerines	NA	20	NA
Temples	NA	7	NA

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In cooperation with the Florida Cooperative Extension Service whose county directors participate in supplying field information.